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ECONOMIC IDEAS IN TOKUGAWA DAYS

By EIJIRO HONJO

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning made much progress in the Tokugawa period. It was no longer a monopoly of nobles and Buddhist priests. In urban districts, there were established many *terakoya* 寺子屋 (private school), where elementary education was given. In the meantime, the economic life of the nation advanced and the *chonin* 町人 (merchant) class rose in influence. In such circumstances, the science of government and economy, unheard of in the previous ages, witnessed a vigorous growth. This accounts for the fact that many economic theories were enunciated in the Tokugawa period.

In the Tokugawa period, the term "economy" 經濟 (*keizai*) was used in a much wider sense than that in which it is employed to-day. It implied all political, economic and social activities. In the *Keizai Roku* 經濟錄, Dazai-Shuntai 大宰春臺, a celebrated scholar in the Tokugawa period, says: "Economy means statecraft. It connotes the administration

of public affairs and the promotion of the welfare of the people." He also makes use of the term *shokka* 食貨, which he defines as the "art of improving the livelihood of all people, from the Emperor down to ordinary citizens." From this it appears that *shokka* was used in a sense more similar to that of the term "economy", as it is employed to-day. Shingu-Ryotei 新宮涼庭, in his book entitled the *Yabureya no Tsudzukuri Banashi* 破れ家のつくり話, deals with economics, politics and the code of officialdom in separate chapters, drawing some line of demarcation between politics and economics, but the distinction he makes is not very clear. In any case, the term "economy" was used in a very wide sense in those days, and it is noticeable that the books on economy published then treated largely of political policies. They were concerned more with discourses on the merits or demerits of the methods of government of the day than with the study of economic theories and principles. Thus, books on economy published in the Tokugawa period are different in substance from the present-day books dealing with political economy. It must be remembered, however, that even in Western countries, it was comparatively recently that political economy was reduced to a systematic study and an independent branch of science. Economic theories in ancient times and in the Middle Ages and even in the early modern age in the West were as crude as those in the Tokugawa period. It is due to the subsequent specialisation of science that economy has come to be studied in recent times as a branch of science distinct from politics. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that because they were loose and desultory, ancient economic theories contained no economic ideas worthy of note.

2. GENERAL TENDENCY OF ECONOMIC IDEAS

As already mentioned, economic theories in the Tokugawa period dealt mostly with political problems or State affairs of the day. For instance, the development of the

currency economy was the occasion for the publication of many dissertations on the merits or demerits of re-coinage or the circulation of paper money. Then, the movement of the rural population to urban districts called forth much comment, theories having been advanced as to how to check the growth of the population of Edo (Tokyo). Again, when there was an outflow of specie in trade done through the port of Nagasaki, some scholars advanced arguments expatiating on the need for suspending foreign trade. In this way, topics of the day, not the principles and laws of systematic political economy, were the main subjects for scholastic discussion. Accordingly, economic ideas of those days, covering as they did a very extensive field, were very complex. Not that there were no points of similarity in the theories advanced by various scholars, however, for it is possible to discern a few main currents of economic thought in their lines of argument. As the general trends of the economic ideas of those days may be mentioned the following:—

(1) The term "economy" was, as already mentioned, used in a wide sense, synonymously with "politics," by practically all scholars of the day.

(2) The feudal system, on which the form of government in those days was based, had a great deal to do with the economic ideas of the day. Indeed, it would be impossible to understand the economic ideas prevalent then without taking due note of feudalism. Most theories accepted feudalism, which it was their purpose to maintain and stabilise. It is true that in the closing days of the Tokugawa period some scholars advocated the adoption of a progressive national policy on the lines of the opening of the country, but most arguments advanced were consistent with feudalism and exclusionism.

These arguments naturally assumed the *samurai* class to be the highest of all classes. They not only recognised the class distinctions existing between *samurai*, farmers, artisans and tradespeople but strove to maintain them. Thus, these economic theories attached special importance to the

interests of the *samurai* class.

(3) Economic theories were greatly influenced by Chinese ideas, as was inevitable in the circumstances then prevailing. In the Tokugawa period, scholars were mostly Confucians. Even scholars in Japanese classics, scholars in Western learning, Buddhist priests, *samurai* and *chonin* read some Chinese books and knew something of Chinese ideas. Such being the case, the ideas of Japanese scholars in those days were generally moulded on ancient Chinese theories. It is true that some scholars, holding Chinese ideas in scant regard, embraced Western ideas, but the fact remains that most scholars were the exponents of Chinese theories and ideas.

(4) In finance, the ruling principle was to fix expenditure according to income. This offers a contrast with present-day finance, in which expenditure is first fixed and then ways and means of providing the requisite money are considered. In those days, just the contrary was the case, for rice was then the dominant factor in economy and the country was closed to foreign intercourse, with the result that the nation, having to rely solely on the production from land at home for its existence, was forced to lead an economic life based on self-sufficiency.

(5) Agriculture was held in special regard. In the Tokugawa period, rice formed the nucleus of finance and economics, and consequently agriculture was the most important industry. People held agriculture in so much regard that it was looked upon as the mainstay of the State.

(6) Thrift was encouraged. Because agriculture was held in high regard, the tendency for the rural population to move to urban districts was looked upon with decided disfavour, as it meant a decline in agriculture. In view of the fact that the nation depended on the limited productive power of land for its existence, luxurious habits were denounced and thrift encouraged. In the *Kunshi Kun* 君子訓, Kaibara-Ekken 貝原益軒 says: "If the ruler wants to govern his people with benevolence, he should practise economy.

There are limits to the productive capacity of land and so, if the ruler is given to luxurious and spendthrift habits, the resources at his command will soon be exhausted and he will find it difficult to make both ends meet. This is especially so as agricultural crops sometimes fail. Should the ruler be reduced to financial straits, it would be impossible for him to perform acts of philanthropy, to provide against emergencies or to relieve the poor. Worse still, he will be forced to resort to extortionate measures, himself running into debt and placing his country in jeopardy. Benevolent government would be out of the question in such circumstances. All wise rulers have been thrifty. Economy is, indeed, a virtue essential to the ruler." Many other scholars also stressed the need of economy.

(7) The idea was prevalent of prizing cereals and despising money. Although currency was finding wider circulation in many provinces, the idea of valuing agricultural products and despising money swayed the people's minds, and this tendency was stimulated by the fact that, what with the seclusion of the country from the outside world, natural calamities and the lack of communications facilities, the country was frequently overtaken by famines—famines so disastrous that large numbers of people died of starvation. It is true that money was gaining increasing regard in some urban communities, but this was rather exceptional. "All wise rulers in all ages have valued cereals and despised money," or "No matter how much gold and silver one may possess, one cannot live, for a single day, on these metals. Rice is the one thing needful for one's livelihood," commented scholars of those days.

3. CHANGES IN ECONOMIC IDEAS

The people's ideas change according to the economic conditions of the day. The Tokugawa period was the age of exclusionism and feudalism, in which rice played the dominant part in national economy. In the latter part of

the period, however, commerce and industry witnessed a marked growth and currency found wide circulation. With the development of urban districts, the *chonin* class gained increasing influence, and the currency economy made so much development as to challenge the supremacy of the land economy. That is to say, a new economic power, viz., the money power of the *chonin* class, sprang up, besides the agricultural economic power. Due to this remarkable economic change, it became impossible for the *samurai* class to maintain its livelihood under the old economic organisation. Nor was it any longer possible for the farmers to support the *samurai* class. In such circumstances, *samurai* finally bowed to the new economic power. They either besought the financial help of *chonin* or turned *chonin* themselves. On the other hand, the *chonin* class gained considerable influence in society by means of its money power. It not only overpowered the *samurai* class but extended its influence into the rural districts. Towards the end of the Tokugawa period, the Shogunate, finding it impossible to maintain its exclusionist policy, opened the country to trade with Western countries. These remarkable economic changes caused equally marked changes in the people's ideas, resulting in the growth of ideas contradictory to the traditional ideas. I shall now briefly touch on a few points illustrative of changes in economic ideas.

(1) The idea of altering ancestral rules. In feudal society, the dominant idea was to observe ancestral rules and discountenance the introduction of anything novel. The authorities in feudal days strove to maintain ancient ways and customs so as to fix everything firmly in its place. Their guiding principle was to keep ancient customs and rules intact, while refusing to adopt any new policy. As changes came over social and economic conditions, however, some scholars began to denounce the practice of adhering rigidly to the old ways and rules simply because they were long established. For instance, Nakai-Chikuzan 中井竹山, in his book, the *Sobo Kigen* 草茅危言, says: "It is hardly neces-

sary to say that the systems established and bequeathed by our ancestors should not be altered wantonly, but it is not proper to uphold all of them without discrimination. Such systems as were initiated by our forefathers with the furtherance of permanent interests in view must be maintained forever, but those that were introduced as temporary expedients may well be discarded, when the special circumstances which called them into being have ceased to exist. The present rulers can hardly be charged with disregarding the bequeathed will of their ancestors if they introduce such reforms as are required by the times."

Towards the end of the Tokugawa period, when the situation at home and abroad became very tense, the view found frequent expression that an emergency situation demanded emergency measures. Some of the Shogunate authorities gave open expression to the view that whereas there was no warrant for any wanton revision of the established rules and regulations, there could be nothing wrong about discarding such rules as were in ill accord with the requirements of the times. The action taken by the Shogunate in lifting the embargo on the construction of big ships was hailed by such reformists as a bold line of policy appropriate to the occasion, which, they asserted, would rather meet the wishes of the founders of the Shogunate. It is, indeed, noteworthy that measures taken in violation of the established rules came to be hailed as not only pertinent but in conformity with the bequeathed wishes of ancestry.

(2) Progressive ideas in favour of the opening of the country. Exclusionism marked Japan's relations with outside Powers in the Tokugawa period, and this exclusionist policy was rigidly adhered to for generations. About the middle part of the Tokugawa period, however, the study of things Western found increasing favour, and, towards the end of the period, the necessity increased of acquiring a good knowledge of Western culture. As early as the Genroku era, Nishikawa-Joken 西川如見 wrote a book entitled the *Kwai Tsusho Ko* 華夷通商考, in which he described conditions abroad.

During the Shotoku era, Arai-Hakuseki 新井白石 wrote the *Sairan Igen* 采覽異言 and the *Seiyo Kibun* 西洋紀聞, in which he outlined the conditions in various foreign countries, as they had been described to him by Dutchmen. Yoshimune 德川吉宗, the eighth Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, gave permission for the perusal of all Dutch books except religious ones, and this led to the progress of Dutch learning in Japan. In the eras of Meiwa and An-ei, the eastward advance of Russian influence caused much attention to be directed to Ezo (Hokkaido), and there were many scholars who urged the necessity of developing that territory. The *Akazeo Fusetsu Ko* 赤蝦夷風説考, a book written by Kudo-Heisuke 工藤平助, was presumably the first book written in Japan dwelling on the need for opening the country to foreign intercourse. Influenced by the views set forth in this book, the Tokugawa Shogunate started an investigation into conditions in Ezo and Karafuto about the fifth year of Tenmei. In his books, the *Seiki Monogatari* 西域物語 and the *Keisei Hisaku* 經世秘策, published during the era of Kwansei, Honta-Toshiaki 本多利明 not only stressed the need for enriching the country through the development of foreign trade but urged the necessity of developing the resources of Ezo and annexing neighbouring territories. In these books he indicated the lines along which a progressive policy should be shaped. After the visit of Commodore Perry to Japan in the closing years of the Tokugawa period, the need for opening the country was more keenly felt and many scholars advanced arguments against the maintenance of the policy of seclusion.

(3) Foreign trade. Trade carried on at Nagasaki with China and Holland in the Tokugawa period was largely unilateral and passive. As a rule, Japan paid with gold, silver and copper currency for the goods imported from abroad, and the consequent heavy outflow of gold, silver and copper caused so much alarm in some quarters that the suspension of trade was strongly urged. Arai-Hakuseki, for instance, wrote: "It is inimical to Japanese interests to import foreign goods, which are of little value, in exchange for

valuable money. Japan has never before relied on foreign countries for the supply of goods. Indeed, there is nothing except medical goods for the supply of which Japan needs to go to other countries. The suspension of the present foreign trade will not prevent Japan from obtaining what she wants." Even concerning medical goods, the importation of which he regarded as the only benefit that Japan could derive from trade, he said: "Many medical materials were produced in Japan in ancient times. Seeing that cotton and tobacco, which were unknown in this country in old days, are now produced everywhere, it will be possible to sow the seeds of medicinal herbs in suitable soil and produce in Japan such medical materials as have never been obtained here before." On the other hand, Honta-Toshiaki, an advocate of the opening of the country, pointed out the unwisdom of pursuing a policy of self-sufficiency, strongly urging the necessity of foreign trade. He dwelt on the benefits accruing from trade to the countries directly concerned, at the same time laying stress on the point that trade should be carried on between nations on an equal footing. Furthermore, emphasising the need for an active export trade, he wrote: "Up to 140 or 150 years ago, Japan had been sending her ships abroad for trade, and it is advisable that this practice should be revived. If the Government builds ships for this purpose and operates them for importing such articles as Japan requires, all domestic needs will be satisfied and there will be no need for this country to await the arrival of Chinese and Dutch ships for their supplies.

At the end of the Tokugawa period, the view in support of active foreign trade found increasing support. In a memorial submitted to the Shogunate under date of June 13th of the sixth year of Kaei, Mukoyama-Gendayu 向山源太夫 stated that while trade might, if carried on in an improper manner, prove inimical to national interests, it would, if properly conducted, promote the permanent interests of the country, as, through it, the foundations for national prosperity and strength could be laid. Asserting that the exclusionist policy

was the sequel to the official ban on Roman Catholicism, and stressing the point that Iyeyasu, the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, permitted trade with foreign countries, he declared that the opening of trade rather meant the restoration of the first Shogun's policy. He thus took the line that trade could be revived without offending against the ancestral rules of the Shogunate, provided the ban on Roman Catholicism was rigidly maintained. The revival of trade, he contended, was necessary for strengthening national defences.

Some of the memorials submitted by the lords of the various clans supported the policy of opening the country to foreign trade.* One submitted by the Lord of the Fukuoka Han maintained that, once foreign trade was permitted, Japan's prosperity would assuredly follow. The Lord of the Hikone Han memorialised the Shogunate in favour of the revival of the system of *shuin-sen* 朱印船 (ships engaged in trade with official permission) for the vigorous pursuit of foreign trade. All this shows that with the change of the times, positive opinions gradually supplanted negative ones.

(4) The idea of remedying Japan's shortcomings by adopting advanced foreign methods. In old times, Western States were looked down upon by many Japanese as barbarian countries, but after the middle part of the Tokugawa period, this idea of despising the West underwent a gradual change. Towards the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the necessity was more widely felt of learning from the West. In a memorial which they submitted to the Shogunate in August of the sixth year of Kaei, the *kanjo bugyo* 勘定奉行 and other officials in charge of coast defence stressed the necessity of acquiring a good knowledge of things Western, saying that Japan would otherwise be involved in much inconvenience in her dealings with Western countries. Takashima-Kihei 高島嘉平, in his memorial to the Shogunate dated October of

* cf. My essay "The Views of various Hans on the opening of the country" vol. XI, no. 1.

the same year, said: "Whereas the Japanese people are ashamed of learning anything from others, Western people rather take pride in learning from others, because they believe that by so doing they are working for the good of their country. They make voyages to many countries, and, when they find anything worth learning in these countries, they immediately adopt it to make up for the shortcomings of their own country. Their eagerness to develop trade and make profits comes from the desire to enrich and strengthen their own country. As they are not in the habit of sticking to antiquated customs, they feel no shame whatever in following the examples of others. On the contrary, they condemn as bigoted men who refuse to learn anything good from others." Sakuma-Shozan 佐久間象山, in his memorial, also urged the necessity of studying Western science. Thus, the idea of seeking knowledge far and wide in the world and breaking down established bad customs was in evidence in the closing years of the Tokugawa period already.

(5) Advocacy of the *samurai's* adoption of the *chonin's* mode of living. In the book entitled the *Chiridzuka Dan* 塵塚談, written by Ogawa-Kendo 小川顯道 in the eleventh year of Bunka, the author says: "Notwithstanding the fact that the *samurai* ought to be the rulers and the merchants the ruled, it appears that the *chonin* have now become virtual rulers." In the latter part of the Tokugawa period, the currency economy made remarkable progress and the *samurai* and farmers, whose livelihood depended on the land economy or the rice economy, were reduced to economic straits, with the result that they had to bow to the financial power of the *chonin*. Ogawa-Kendo had this state of things in view when he described the *chonin* as the virtual rulers. As money power reigned supreme in those days, the *chonin* class which possessed it acquired influence by degrees until it rose to be a mighty social force. Both the *samurai* and the farmers were obliged to seek the financial help of the *chonin* in order to get out of the financial difficulties in which they found themselves. It was thought that two courses

were open for the *samurai* to recover the ruling power in these changed social conditions. One was to revive the natural economy, and the other was for the *samurai* to take to the ways of the *chonin* class.

Ogyu-Sorai 荻生徂徠, who advocated the former course, attributed the poverty of the *samurai* to the fact that they were so circumstanced as to spend much of their time in journeys to and from Edo (the seat of the Shogunate), and suggested that they should be made to stay in their homes so that they might have little need for money. If they could dispense with the use of money, the influence of the *chonin* would gradually decline, with the result that prices would be lowered.

Motoori-Norinaga 本居宣長 also discoursed on the evil effects of the currency economy. He was for setting restrictions on transactions involving money. He held that if such transactions were rendered difficult, people would come to hold money in less regard and direct more earnest attention to their chief occupation, namely, agriculture. As the currency economy advanced, its incompatibility with the feudal system, which was based on the natural economy, became more manifest, but the scholars referred to above were hoping against hope in trying to check the progress of the currency economy in order to restore the natural economy.

In view of the infeasibility of this theory, another theory was advanced by some scholars to the effect that the *samurai* should adapt themselves to the currency economy. Advocates of this theory urged that the *samurai* should follow the ways of *chonin* with the ultimate object of depriving the *chonin* of their money power. Dazai-Shuntai, referring to the affluence of the feudal lords who adopted a monopoly system in their Han, said: "As money is everything now-a-days, all people, not excepting feudal lords and high-class *samurai*, are bent on getting money. Since the shortest way to get money is to sell things, some feudal lords have thought fit to embark on commercial transactions. For instance, the Lord of Tsushima monopolises the sale of Korean ginseng

and other goods. As he buys these goods cheaply and sells them at high prices, he is better-off than a lord with a fief of, say, 200,000 *koku* of rice, though he is himself the lord of but a small province with a fief of only 20,000 *koku*."

In the *Rikenron* 利權論, a book written by Tōyama-Kagetaka 遠山景賢 in the fifth year of Kansei, the author contended that the merchants must be dispossessed of money power, if the financial position of the *samurai* and other people was to be improved. Denouncing the practice prevalent among rich merchants of making profits by lending money to feudal lords and high-class *samurai*, he stressed the need for strictly forbidding this practice. As an alternative, he urged that the Government should itself lend cheap money to feudal lords or *samurai* in financial distress. For the relief of poor farmers also, he advised the Government to advance funds at low rates of interest, thereby taking over the control of financial operations. Similar arguments were advanced by many other scholars in the closing years of the Tokugawa period. In the *Shumaiken Josho* 收米權上書, a memorial submitted to the Shogunate in the third year of Keio, the memorialist severely rebuked rice merchants for their unscrupulous tactics, asserting that it was highly prejudicial to State interests to allow them to manipulate the price of rice. He moralised on the need for the Government to control and monopolise rice. The same point of view was often set forth by those who memorialised the authorities urging them to establish market places for products. Advocates of these plans held that the Shogunate should recover commercial rights from the merchants by establishing market places for products under its own control.

4. CHANGES THAT OCCURRED IN ECONOMIC IDEAS WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE TIMES

As already mentioned, economic ideas underwent changes as social conditions altered. Let me now review the economic ideas which were prevalent in different periods of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

(1) The early period. This period covers the time from the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate down to the Kyoho era. During this period, the foundations of the Shogunate were firmly established and perfect tranquillity was restored to the country. The sanguinary atmosphere which prevailed in the eras of Keicho and Genna had disappeared and peace reigned throughout the country, especially after the era of Genroku. As is usual in times of peace, learning was held in regard by the public while martial arts were at a discount. As currency had already been in wide circulation in the era of Genroku, there was a steady growth of the currency economy as against the natural economy. Whereas the impoverishment of the agrarian class increased, the influence of the *chonin* class was gradually on the rise. Such being the case, the need for respecting agriculture and for suppressing the *chonin* class was already being urged by many scholars, while the widening gulf between wealth and poverty in agrarian communities was also receiving increasing attention. It was in this period that Kumazawa-Banzan 熊澤蕃山 gave publicity to his conservative view in favour of the restoration of the natural economy to supplant the currency economy.

The leading scholars in this period were as follows:—

Names.	Years in which they lived.	Principal books written.
Honta-Masanobu 本多正信	7th year of Temmon to 2nd year of Genna (1538—1616)	Honsa Roku 本佐錄
Yamasaki-Ansai 山崎闇齋	4th year of Genna to 2nd year of Tenwa (1618—1682)	Kotetsu Mondo 蓋微問答
Kumazawa-Banzan 熊澤蕃山	5th year of Genna to 4th year of Genroku (1619—1691)	Daigaku Wakumon 大學或問
Miyazaki-Yasusada 宮崎安貞	9th year of Genna to 10th year of Genroku (1623—1697)	Nogyo Zensho 農業全書
Ito-Jinsai 伊藤仁齋	6th year of Kanyei to 2nd year of Hoei (1629—1705)	Doshimon 童子問
Kaibara-Ekken 貝原益軒	7th year of Hoei to 4th year of Shotoku (1630—1714)	Kadōkun 家道訓

(2) The middle period. The heyday of the Shogunate followed the peaceful era of Genroku. Arai-Hakuseki, a scholar-statesman of the day, sought to build a civilised

State on a complete code of decorum. His policy was civilian rather than militarist; it was idealistic rather than practical. His policy, which erred on the side of formalism, was largely reversed by Yoshimune, the Eighth Shogun, who pursued the policy of inculcating the habits of thrift and simplicity among the people. Unlike Hakuseki, who carried out many revisions with a view to adorning the régime of peace with a mass of systems and rules, Yoshimune made it the rule to retain the original structure of government in its essentials and enforce administration in accordance with the spirit in which the Shogunate was founded. Realising the need for removing the evils which had grown up in the sequel to years of tranquillity, he directed special attention to the cultivation of thrifty habits and the martial spirit. His chief aim was to promote practical interests and advantages. In the field of learning also, he encouraged practical science. The renovation effected by him along these lines embodied what historians call the Kyoho Reform. The fact that this Kyoho Reform was rendered necessary shows that the defectiveness and inconsistency of feudal government had already become marked. By its defectiveness is meant the advance of the currency economy at the cost of the natural economy, or the rise of the *chonin* class to the detriment of the interests of the *samurai* and agrarian classes.

Such being the case, economic theories in this period dealt, in many cases, with the gold and silver currency, coinage and the prices of rice and other commodities, in their relation to the currency economy and to the financial straits of feudal lords. On the other hand, the rise of the *chonin* class and the development of urban districts gave rise to much discussion as to the merits or demerits of the expansion of cities and of the tendency for farmers to give up the plough to settle in urban districts. Many scholars also discoursed on the paramount importance of agriculture, denouncing the growth of the *chonin's* influence. As measures for the rescue of feudal lords and *samurai* from their financial distress, theories were advanced in favour of

the permanent settlement of *samurai* in their places of residence and in support of the introduction of a monopoly system or the adoption by the *samurai* of the *chonin*'s mode of living. In short, the economic theories in this period are of special significance as reflecting the initial stage of the bankruptcy of the feudal economy of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

The principal scholars in this period were:—

Names.	Years in which they lived.	Chief books written.
Arai-Hakuseki 新井白石	3rd year of Meireki to 10th year of Kyoho (1657—1725)	Hakuseki Kengi 白石建議
Muro-Kyuso 室鳩巢	1st year of Manji to 19th year of Kyoho (1658—1734)	Kenzan Hisaku 兼山秘策
Tanaka-Kyugu 田中丘隅	2nd year of Kammon to 14th year of Kyoho (1662—1729)	Minkan Seiyo 民間省要
Ogyu-Sorai 荻生徂徠	6th year of Kammon to 13th year of Kyoho (1666—1728)	Seidan 政談
Dazai-Shuntai 大宰春臺	8th year of Empo to 4th year of Enkyo (1680—1748)	Keizai Roku 經濟錄
Ishida-Baigan 石田梅巖	2nd year of Jokyo to 1st year of Enkyo (1685—1744)	Tohi Mondo 都鄙問答

(3) The later period. Although the practical government of Yoshimune appeared to improve things temporarily, the strong current of the times was not to be stemmed so easily. This was clear from the fact that under the succeeding Tanuma 田沼 régime things deteriorated again and the Kansei Reform ensued. The Shogunate administration directed by Tanuma was open to much criticism, as corruption marked politics in those days. There were nevertheless unmistakable signs observable already in this period of the country's gradual progress towards a new order of things. There was the growth of loyalist ideas and the progress of Dutch learning. In the meantime, the financial difficulties of the *samurai* class and the impoverishment of agrarian communities went on increasing, so that there was a crying need for some effectual measures to save the situation. In foreign relations, the Russian menace to Japanese northern territory became greater. In the Kansei Reform, carried out by Matsudaira-Sadanobu 松平定信, Tanuma's administrative

policy was completely reversed, and some years later, in the Tempo era, another Reform was effected by Midzuno-Echizen-no-Kami 水野越前守. Thus, in this period two Reforms—the Kansei and the Tempo Reforms—were carried out in an effort to maintain and develop the Shogunate government. Despite these Reforms, however, the various tendencies incompatible with feudalism, which had been developing since the middle period, witnessed a steady growth, while the country's foreign relations took on more complicated phases until the country was finally opened to foreign intercourse in the Ansei era.

One prominent feature of the economic ideas in this period is the variety of their proponents. Beside Confucian scholars, they included scholars in Japanese classics, *chonin* scholars and students of Dutch learning. The arguments they advanced naturally covered an extensive field, numerous subjects being taken up for dissertation. Another feature noticeable is that there were roughly two schools of thought, one conservative and the other progressive. While the former was for maintaining social and economic conditions largely as they were, the latter supported revolutionary changes in the political, social and economic organisations. Positive and progressive ideas were not entirely absent in the former period, but they were very clearly and vigorously set forth in this period. Motoori-Norinaga was rather conservative; Nakai-Chikuzan was a little more progressive than Norinaga, for he held that even ancestral rules should be departed from, if necessary; while Honta-Toshiaki was most progressive in his ideas. Sato-Nobuhiro 佐藤信淵 based his view on a very close and fundamental analysis of the social organisation of the day. Whereas Arai-Hakuseki and Ogyu-Sorai, of the former period, were Confucian scholars of Edo (Tokyo), Motoori-Norinaga, of this period, was a famous scholar in Japanese classics. Nakai-Chikuzan was a Confucian scholar of Osaka, a city in which the *chonin* class reigned supreme. Again, Honta-Toshiaki was an authority on Dutch learning. It is noteworthy that scholars of these various descriptions

propounded their economic theories from their respective scholastic points of view.

The chief scholars in this period were as follows:—

Names.	Years in which they lived.	Books written.
Miura-Baien 三浦梅園	8th year of Kyoho to 1st year of Kansei (1723—1789)	Kagen 價原
Motoori-Norinaga 本居宣長	15th year of Kyoho to 1st year of Kyowa (1730—1801)	Tamakushige Beppon 玉くしげ別本
Nakai-Chikuzan 中井竹山	15th year of Kyoho to 1st year of Bunka (1730—1804)	Sobo Kigen 草茅危言
Honta-Toshiaki 本多利明	1st year of Enkyo to 4th year of Bunsei (1744—1821)	Keisei Hisaku and Seiki Monogatari 經世秘策・西城物語
Yamagata-Banto 山片蟠桃	3rd year of Enkyo to 9th year of Bunka (1746—1821)	Yume-no-Shiro 夢の代
Kusama-Naokata 草間直方	3rd year of Horeki to 2nd year of Tempo (1753—1831)	Sanka Dzui 三貨圖彙
Kaiho-Seiryō 海保青陵	5th year of Horeki to 14th year of Bunka (1755—1817)	Seiryō Keizai Dan 青陵經濟談
Matsudaira-Sadanobu 松平定信	8th year of Horeki to 12th year of Bunka (1758—1829)	Rakuo-kō Isho 樂翁公遺書
Sato-Nobuhiro 佐藤信淵	6th year of Meiwa to 3rd year of Kayei (1769—1850)	Sato Shinen Kagaku Zenshu 佐藤信淵家學全集
Shingu-Ryotei 新宮涼庭	7th year of Temmei to 7th year of Kayei (1787—1854)	Yabureya-no-Tsudzukurī Banashi 破れ家のつぐり話
Ninomiya-Sontoku 二宮尊徳	7th year of Temmei to 3rd year of Ansei (1787—1855)	Ninomiya Sontoku Zenshu 二宮尊徳全集
Shoji-Koki 正司考祇	5th year of Kansei to 4th year of Ansei (1793—1854)	Keizai Mondo Hiroku 經濟問答秘録

(4) The last period. The feudal economy of the Tokugawa Shogunate received a violent shock during the fifteen years following the visit of Commodore Perry's squadron to these shores, which finally led to the abandonment by Japan of the exclusionist policy in favour of the opening of the country. It is true that Japan's foreign relations had developed difficult phases even before this period, but it was after Commodore Perry's visit that they assumed such decidedly grave aspects that they called for a speedy adjustment. In the Tempo Reform, some noteworthy economic

measures were taken, but all these renovations were conceived and carried out on the basis of a purely Japanese knowledge of things; no new knowledge of Western science or methods was applied. In the fifteen years of this period, the Tokugawa Shogunate faced a situation that was the gravest in its history and that made revolutionary changes imperative. The last and supreme efforts were made in this period to prevent the downfall of the Shogunate, and to this end various reforms were introduced in defiance of ancestral rules, but all this was powerless to avert the final collapse of the edifice of the Shogunate. Many of the ideas which found expression in this period are naturally worthy of special note.

In this period, many feudal lords, *samurai* and other people, as well as scholars, gave free expression to their views. Such being the case, in order to see the trends of ideas in this period, it is necessary to examine not only the ideas of distinguished scholars of the day but the memorials and petitions submitted by officials and other persons to the Shogunate. As already mentioned, ideas in support of alterations of ancestral rules and the adoption of advanced foreign methods to make up for drawbacks in the domestic system were propounded. Some scholars stressed a regard for public opinion in the administration of affairs; some urged the control of commerce by the Shogunate and some others maintained that contributions should be levied on the rich and that merchants should be taxed. Particularly vigorous was the advance of the theory in support of opening the country. This theory was dominant among the authorities of the Shogunate after the era of Ansei. It is necessary to mention that these ideas were whetted by the knowledge gained by Japanese in their conversations with foreign seamen, as well as by the opinions expressed by Léon Roches, the then French Minister, and the Envoys of Britain, America, Russia and other countries.

The prominent scholars in this period were:—

Names.	Years in which they lived.	Principal books written.
Takashima-Kihel 高島喜平	10th year of Kansei to 2nd year of Keio (1798—1866)	Memorials 上書
Fujita-Toko 藤田東湖	3rd year of Bunka to 2nd year of Ansei (1806—1855)	Shoka Fuyu no Gi 上下富有の議
Sakuma-Shozan 佐久間象山	8th year of Bunka to 1st year of Genji (1811—1864)	Memorials 上書

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPANESE ECONOMIC IDEAS

The following points may be mentioned as characterising Japanese economic ideas in the Tokugawa period and after :

(1) The ideas prevalent in the Tokugawa period were those of Confucian scholars, scholars in Japanese classics, *chonin* scholars and authorities on Dutch learning, while after the Meiji Restoration, Western economic ideas were imported. These Japanese and imported ideas were incorporated, and such construction was put on these incorporated ideas as to bring them into accord with the trends of the times. It must here be mentioned that the ideas thus incorporated were very multifarious.

(2) It was under the stress of necessity that foreign ideas were imported. It was due to her desire to profit by the ideas of advanced countries that Japan adopted Confucianism in the Tokugawa period and imported Western economic ideas after the Meiji Restoration. It was by no means out of curiosity or caprice that she did so. The underlying motive in importing these ideas was the desire to enrich and strengthen the country. For Japan, who made her debut on the stage of capitalism very late, after the Restoration, it was absolutely necessary to strive to profit by the economic experience of the advanced capitalistic countries of the West.

(3) Japanese economic ideas did not embody the mere imitation of imported ideas. Japanese scholars closely scrutinised imported ideas, put on them such construction as was

in accord with the requirements of the times or set them in new lights, thereby reconstructing them into ideas peculiar to Japan. The Chinese and Dutch ideas imported into Japan in the Tokugawa period were studied by Japanese scholars of those days in the light of the economic conditions then prevailing in this country and were so revised as to accord with these conditions. With the development of the *chonin* class, many new points of views came into vogue, and the idea of *shingaku* 心學—the philosophy of the *chonin* class—also springing up. Towards the end of the Tokugawa period, under the stress of foreign relations, the traditional conservative and retrogressive ideas were discarded in favour of positive and progressive ones. Western ideas imported after the Restoration, whether they were liberal, protectionist or social, were all studied in conjunction with the peculiar conditions in Japan, and efforts were made to remould them so that they might fit in with Japanese conditions. In the years immediately after their importation, they were not altogether free from crudity, but, as time passed, they were improved and revised so that they finally found their place in the system of economic ideas characteristic of Japan.

(4) Neither the economic ideas in the Tokugawa period nor those in post-Restoration days were unpractical entities with no relation to the needs of the day. They were imported, not for their novelty, but for the purpose of satisfying practical needs. This does not, however, mean that theoretical principles and rules were held in contempt; it means that greater importance was attached to the practical side than to the theoretical side of ideas. That is to say, the principal consideration was how to help forward Japan's development and her economic independence.

(5) It may appear at first sight that there is no connection between the ideas in the Tokugawa period and those in the post-Restoration days, but such is not the case. It is true that there is a marked difference between the feudal economy of the Tokugawa period and the capitalistic economy of the post-Restoration days, so much so that there appears

to be no link of ideas between them, but it must be remembered that there were many holders of progressive ideas in the Tokugawa period, especially in its closing days, while, on the contrary, even after the Restoration, conservative and reactionary ideas prevailed in some Japanese quarters. Inasmuch as Western political economy began to be imported into Japan towards the end of the Tokugawa period and formed the basis of the present-day economic ideas, it is clear that there is a connection between the ideas in the Tokugawa period and those in the post-Restoration days.

In short, Japanese economic ideas have been developed in Tokugawa days and after in consonance with the progress of national economic facts, imported ideas being always revised and remoulded in such a way as to accord with Japanese national conditions. Thus, the system of economic ideas peculiar to Japan has been established.